

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 7040
APPLICANT NAME: Calexico New River Committee
PROJECT TITLE: New River Improvement Project

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$15,678,454
COST MATCH: \$15,678,454
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$75,351,298

DESCRIPTION: A comprehensive proposal to protect human health and the environment and improve the overall water quality of the Salton Sea Transboundary Watershed, with particular emphasis on the New River as it crosses the Mexican-U.S. border from Mexicali to Calexico, CA. This proposal is consistent with key recommendations and the strategic direction of California's Environmental Border Program and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin's 2004 Watershed Management Initiative and the Board's Basin Plan (2003 Amended Version and 2004 Workplan). This Proposal will assist the RWQCB in the control and reduction of sources of international pollution in the New River.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Fail

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1.

There is no proof of adoption of an IRWMP by the two co-applicants (City of Calexico and the Calexico New River Committee). The collection of four documents said to comprise the adopted FED do not meet the IRWMP Minimum Standards. There is no proof of adoption of these four documents by the individual entities - only signatures of responsible officials shown for some documents. The applicant uses the proposal along with submitted attachments in lieu of a proper IRWMP umbrella document. The applicant does not clearly demonstrate how the four documents work together as an IRWMP. Review comments for almost every evaluation criteria (Questions 3 through 21) show the applicant's information is either missing or not addressed in sufficient detail. A regional map is referenced in Att. 4. No specific map can be found that meets the referenced description. See additional review comments under question 3 and 22.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1.

Maps are provided separately in the individual plans and the map referred to as the most representative of the region under consideration does not include the boundary of the Salton Sea Watershed (nor that of the major local agencies & basins). Attachment 4 states that a map is "attached" and that has been "excerpted" from one of the functionally equivalent documents. No specific map can be found that meets this description.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1.

The objectives are simply listed, are not adequately described and it is not clear as to how they were determined. The proposal does not include discussion on how the objectives would be integrated to benefit the "region" under consideration, the Salton Sea Transboundary Watershed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1.

The application has listed water management strategies from three of the four "functionally equivalent" plans that collectively form the regional plan. It is not clear how all of these work together as IRWMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

The proposal does not explain how regional priorities relate to the "plan region" of the Salton Sea Transboundary Watershed. The references provided lead to language that does not contain actual priorities. What are missing are a prioritization of the specific implementation projects within the region, and a consideration of the effects that current projects underway in the region may have on the IRWMP.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

The Needs Assessment Report identifies thirty-five non-prioritized projects on the California side of the California-Mexico border region and the types of studies that need to be completed, but provides no specific timelines or sequence of actions or events to complete them. The applicant needs to develop an implementation plan using these documents as support.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

The proposal offers a very vague paragraph on how the "layering" of the four planning documents would cover key impact & benefits issues of concern.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

This section does not include sufficient discussion on technical methods, data & analyses on water management strategies of the plan. A technical basis to support the selection of the chosen strategies is poorly defended, if at all. Data gaps are not clearly identified. While monitoring is mentioned, it is not clear why monitoring over and above what the Regional Board is doing is necessary and how the additional monitoring fills information gaps.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

The proposal refers to monitoring and data dissemination of individual plans. Integrated mechanisms are not described. The proposal relies on the Regional Water Board, State Water Board, and the Border Environmental Program for data management.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

The proposal refers to one of the plans as having the "best financing plan to implement" the regional integrated plan. This is not substantiated by evidence of components of the other individual plans being integrated within the cited finance plan. Operations and maintenance costs are not addressed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

Attachment 5 references part of the table of contents as support for these criteria. Since the plan is made up of local projects and plans, this relationship should be detailed in Attachment 5, but it is not. No City planning document submitted. Not clear how FED will coordinate with local planning efforts.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

The four plans together address stakeholder issues. Details of stakeholder involvement process as relates to an integrated plan are not provided. It does not appear there that there are any agreements in place to support the project

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match. Pass or Fail.

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

The proposed project fits in with the general issue of dealing with Salton Sea surface water quality problem & the New River pollution that is discussed in the local plans.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

This is a single project proposal. The project is phased and the applicant discusses the phases. The applicant does not discuss how this project would fit in with other projects in this region.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

Some budget details are missing. There are numerous discrepancies on the estimated amounts and inconsistencies in the component descriptions between the two submitted tables.

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Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

The applicant only provides a list a starting dates for the phases of the project. It is difficult to assess the implementation schedule based on the information provided. There is no discussion of how this project fits in with others in the region. It appears no realistic schedule for completing the EIR has been submitted.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

The poor water quality of this body of water alone demonstrates a need for this project. However, the applicant does not describe current water management systems or how the project will meet long-term water management needs. Economic and fiscal impacts are not discussed; neither are the critical negative impacts that would result from not doing the project.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

The applicant is requesting a match funding waiver on the basis of having communities that fall below the 80% of median income mark. The numbers provided by the applicant show the region is at 82% of the median income. The project would benefit its inhabitants with improved health risks associated with polluted surface water.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

The proposal meets directly three out of the six Program Preferences that are identified in the guidelines which deal mainly with water quality & pollution reduction issues. It lacks in having multi-benefit components and does not have groundwater management aspects to it.

TOTAL SCORE: DISQUALIFIED
